



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY SHERIFFS AND U.S. ARMY
PARTNER ON THE BIG ISLAND TO USE THE POHAKULOA TRAINING
AREA FIREARMS RANGE**

HONOLULU – The Big Island Sheriffs have a new option for firearms training, thanks to an agreement with the U.S. Army Garrison Pohakuloa.

Today, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Shwedo, Commander of the U.S. Army Garrison Pohakuloa, Command Sergeant Major Alan Higgs, Public Safety Director Ted Sakai and Lieutenant Pat Kawai with the Sheriff Division, gathered at the U.S. Army Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) for a signing ceremony and to announce the new partnership.

PTA's ranges are primarily used for military combat readiness. In an effort to develop stronger partnerships with state and county law enforcement, PTA offered the use of their range to state Sheriffs as well as county police.

With the signing of the new agreement, Sheriff Deputies will now be allowed to use the PTA facility for firearm qualification, requalification and shooting practice, as well as classroom space.

"We understand the importance of the work of the Sheriff's office here on the Island of Hawaii and the value of training that not only keeps the Deputies safe, but also all of us who live here," said Lieutenant Colonel Eric Shwedo, Commander, U.S. Army Garrison Pohakuloa. "This is why the decision to have the Sheriff's use these facilities is easy, and we are pleased that they will be here training".

There are no public shooting ranges on Hawaii Island. Sheriffs have been using a range on a private ranch and will continue to use it, along with the new resources at PTA.

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"We acknowledge and support PTA and appreciate their generosity for reaching out to us," said Lt. Pat Kawai, from the Sheriff Division. "Establishing this relationship means we will have another training option to use".

"We have a great relationship with Lt. Kawai and his staff and we believe the expanded use of these facilities is beneficial to all who live here," said Command Sergeant Alan Higgs, U.S. Army Garrison Pohakuloa.

PTA sits on 133,000 acres and includes an 80-acre military residential area with a fuel yard, fire and police departments, and an airfield with a 3,700-foot runway.

PTA's firing ranges allow units to conduct small-arms and crew-served weapons familiarization training and qualifications, as well as artillery and mortar live fire.

Through the years, PTA's ranges and training areas have helped Army, Marine, Air Force and Navy units maintain their combat readiness. Most recently, 25th Infantry Division Units, Kaneohe-based Marines and Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers prepared at PTA for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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